



The Conservation Corner

Newsletter of the Charleston, S. C. Soil and Water Conservation District

2007 Annual Report

Inside this issue:

<i>Wilkes and Davis Awards Continued...</i>	2
<i>Commissioner Award! Ashley Scenic River</i>	3
<i>District In Action</i>	4-6
<i>District Education</i>	5-6
<i>Highlights/Contest Info</i>	6-7
<i>District Move Info</i>	6
<i>NRCS News</i>	8-9
<i>The Year in Pictures</i>	10-11
<i>Affiliate Advertising Members</i>	12

BILL WILKES WINS NATIONAL AWARD!

Our very own William "Bill" Wilkes won the NRCS National Earth Team Individual Volunteer of the Year award for 2006! He was nominated by USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, NRCS, (the agency that administers the Earth Team Volunteer Program).

Below: William Simpson, Chairman, presents Bill Wilkes with the 2006 Volunteer Award!

A 1949 graduate of The Citadel, he served in the U.S. Marine Corps/WWII, and then served as General Manager of International Operations for Koppers Company, Inc. (Forest Products Group). He retired after nearly 40 years of service and returned home to Charleston where he concentrated his efforts on conservation and volunteering for the Charleston NRCS Earth Team.

For the past 18 years, Bill has been an Associate Commissioner with the Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District, a part-time employee with NRCS and a dedicated and passionate Earth Team Volunteer. His enthusiasm for volunteerism has inspired hundreds of other volunteers to join the Earth Team and help rebuild the dunes that protect the fragile

barrier islands of Charleston County. Bill has headed up the local dunes restoration project on these Islands for more than 15 years. In 1989, Hurricane Hugo caused major damage to the barrier islands and dunes of Sullivan's Island.

Working with local and county groups and leaders, Wilkes assisted in coordinating weekend workdays that combined the time and talents of hundreds of volunteers. These volunteers erected sand dune fences and planted dune plants to stabilize the vulnerable dunes, in addition to protecting valuable habitat for sea turtles.

We are all so very proud of Bill Wilkes and his many years of dedication to conservation!

Continued on next page...



CHARLESTON WELCOMES RUTHIE DAVIS!

The Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District, along with NRCS are proud to welcome Ruthie Davis to Charleston, South Carolina as the new USDA/NRCS District Conservationist for Charleston and Berkeley Counties. Ruthie joined the S.C. USDA/NRCS Team this past February and has already shown her outstanding qualities in leadership with the Charleston District recently undergoing and completing a great NRCS Quality Review and also with the challenges of the relocation of the Charleston Field Office.

Ruthie is originally from Glen Allen, Virginia, and earned a B.S. in Biology from Virginia State University. She began her conservation career as an Earth Team Volunteer with Virginia NRCS, and then signed on as an AmeriCorps Volunteer in Atlanta. During her service with AmeriCorps, she worked on outdoor educational projects and performed water quality monitoring of streams.

Continued on next page...



WILKES AWARD CONTINUED...



Wilkes educated a group of volunteers who are preparing to erect sand fencing on Sullivan's Island. He prepared supply bags for each volunteer, containing all the items they need for a successful day at dune restoration, including bottled water!



The finished product!

In about one year the fence will trap blowing sand almost to the top of the four-foot fence, thus creating a brand new sand dune!

RUTHIE DAVIS CONTINUED.....



Above, Ruthie inspects fenceline installed with cost-share under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The Berkeley County landowner installed the fence as part of a planned grazing system.

Right, Ruthie reviews the conservation plan and contract with the landowner. The producer implemented a prescribed grazing system in Charleston county with EQIP cost-share funds.

Ruthie started with NRCS as a Soil Conservation Technician in Atlanta at a satellite plant materials center where she propagated and transplanted plants throughout the city in preparation for the 1996 Olympics. She then moved to New Jersey to serve as a Soil Conservationist, and also worked in several field offices in Virginia, and served one detail in Rhode Island and Ohio before coming to the Palmetto State. *Welcome to South Carolina Ruthie!*



DISTRICT IN ACTION

TUMBLESTON RECEIVES OUTSTANDING COMMISSIONER FOR 2007!



Greg Henderson, President of the SCACD, presents Tumbleston with Commissioner award for 2007.

Raymond L. Tumbleston was selected as the “**Outstanding Conservation District Commissioner for 2007!**”. This is a distinguished award given to Commissioners across the State of SC for their leadership in conservation. Tumbleston has devoted his life to conservation issues. Currently serving his 19th year as Commissioner, Raymond has been a proponent of the soil and water conservation programs with unmatched enthusiasm. A graduate of Clemson University, his background in conservation began over 40 years ago as a farmer, grower, packer and shipper of fresh tomatoes (1200 acres), watermelons, and cantaloupes on Edisto Island. His years of service, commitment, and dedication to natural resources are reflected in the many District awards received.

Very active in his home community, Mr. Tumbleston serves as elder of the Edisto Island Presbyterian Church. Equally active in his agri-business community, he was one of the prime founders of the Sea Islands Watershed Planning Committee. This committee consists of leading citizens of Charleston County who are instrumental in protecting the natural resources of the County, particularly in the area of Sea Islands Watershed that encompasses the islands of Johns, Wadmalaw, Yonges and Edisto. Of major concern to the Committee are water quality enhancement, farmland protection, private property rights and stormwater runoff management. Tumbleston is a past Vice-President of the Charleston County Planning Board, charter member of the Edisto Land Use Committee, Director of the Charleston County Farm Bureau, Past President of the SC Tomato Growers Association, Executive Board Member of the Agricultural Society of SC, Ag South Bank Board Member and currently serves on the Edisto River Basin Project. He was awarded the Woodmen-of-the-World Outstanding Conservation Farmer-of-the-Year in 1996 and 1997. Raymond Tumbleston is a leading conservationist that South Carolina can be proud to recognize. His extensive experience in farming along with his conservation outreach in the community have been and continue to be his legacy.

CAROLINA SELECT: NEW “CONSERVATION TEA” NOW AVAILABLE



Carolina Select Tea, recently introduced by horticulturist Mack Fleming, is good for your health and for our environment. Donations of 10% of the net profits will be given to the South and North Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Districts to promote the protection and conservation of the states' natural resources. **Carolina Select Tea** is currently available in all stores of Piggly Wiggly and IGA.

As a South Carolina native, conservationist, and tea-growing authority, Mack Fleming has now used his experience and concerns for the environment to produce **Carolina Select Tea**, an exceptionally smooth and fresh tea selected for both southern iced and hot teas. Health studies suggest that the powerful antioxidants contained in tea may prevent cancer and heart disease. **Carolina Select Tea** is a premium all natural black tea known as orange pekoe & contains less than half the caffeine of coffee.

Mack is a former *Conservationist of the Year* from Charleston County and served as Chairman of the Lowcountry Resource Conservation & Development Commission for six years. The RC&D Commission approved and funded projects in eight Lowcountry counties dealing primarily with conservation, flood control, and recreation.

Agreements have been signed by both the South and North Carolina Soil and Water Conservation and **Carolina Select Tea** outlining the legal commitments of all parties detailing the major purpose of funding environmental education for youth in each county. Amanda Bauknight, President, of the South Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Foundation said, “We are pleased that monies will be provided based on sales from **Carolina Select Tea**. These donations will provide seed funds that will protect and conserve the natural resources of our state by programs in environment conservation education for our area youth.” Bill Simpson, Chairman, Charleston County Soil and Water Conservation District, formally a tea researcher himself, said “It will be great to have additional educational money to add to our student’s knowledge on the importance of wise use and protection of our natural resources and the environment for the benefit of all residents of Charleston and Berkeley Counties. We appreciate Mack’s interest and involvement in supporting youth conservation education under our new partnership. We wholeheartedly support this important undertaking in supporting a healthy local product.”

DISTRICT IN ACTION

RC&D NEWS

The SEWEE Stewards Program of Charleston County was the 2007 winner of the Lowcountry RC&D Youth Environmental Education grant of \$500. The program offers multiple in-class lessons to fifth-graders on fresh water wetlands: their flora and fauna found there. These lessons are then brought to life with hands-on, interactive programs on the Refuge lands so students can have experiences they will never forget. Many of the groups' activities are located in the ACE Basin National Wildlife Reserve located in lower Charleston County. The Lowcountry RC&D Council comprises seven counties in lower S.C. Charleston County is represented by District Commissioner William Kennerty and Associate Commissioner William Wilkes.



The photo shows 5th grade students from Minnie Hughes Elementary School. On the far left is Julie Binz, educator for the SEWEE Assoc. On the far right is William Kennerty, of the Lowcountry RC&D Council and Karen Beshears, Executive Director of SEWEE.

CAROLINA COASTAL ADVENTURE



Over seventy South Carolina high school ninth and tenth graders enjoyed the seventh annual Carolina Coastal Adventure environmental education camp October 12-14th. Students from all over the state, representing over twenty-six counties attended. Sponsorship occurred through the support of South Carolina's Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Individual Districts selected and sponsored rising 9th and 10th grader applicants with an interest in natural resources. The District sponsored Cecelia McTighe, shown above right, dip netting.

EDISTO/SAVANNAH AREA MEETING

The Spring Edisto/Savannah Area Meeting was hosted by the Dorchester Conservation District on April 10, 2007. It was held at Brosnan Forest located near Dorchester, SC. Following the business meeting and lunch, a tour was given of the forest. Brosnan Forest is a private hunting reserve and recreational retreat owned and managed by Norfolk Southern Railroad. Those attending from Charleston District were: Raymond and Carla Tumbleston, Bill Wilkes, William Kennerty, Jack and Betty Day, and Lindsay Fairchild.



BUFFERS, BLUEGRASS, & BBQ:

ASHLEY SCENIC RIVER, CONSERVATION DISTRICTS HOLD CONSERVATION EVENT



The Ashley Scenic River Advisory Council hosted an event to raise awareness of important conservation issues relating to the Ashley River. Lindsay Fairchild, SC Department of Natural Resources, organized an evening consisting of bluegrass music, food and information on native plants, easements and Land Trusts. The Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District, along with Dorchester District, sponsored the meal for this event. Local speakers, including representatives from SC Native Plant Society, Lowcountry Open Land Trust and Design Works, LC, discussed topics relevant to the Ashley Scenic River. Stakeholders in the area convened to celebrate the natural, scenic, cultural and historic resources the Scenic River boasts. The event took place the evening of Thursday, October 18th Magnolia Plantation & Gardens. The Ashley Scenic River Advisory Council is composed of local citizens representing river-bordering landowners, river users, and community groups with interests in the river. The locally led conservation group pursues goals through education, outreach and advocacy to raise awareness of important issues surrounding the Ashley Scenic River. A 22-mile segment of the Ashley River was designated a State Scenic River extending from Sland's Bridge (US Highway 17-A) near Summerville to the Mark Clark expressway (I-526) bridge in Charleston. Within this segment, a visitor can experience a blackwater swamp, the tides of the Atlantic, and the history of South Carolina. The Ashley River was designated a South Carolina Scenic River in June 1998, making it the first State Scenic River established in the Lowcountry. With this designation, the Ashley gained statewide recognition as an outstanding resource and became the sixth river in SC to achieve this special status. The purpose of the South Carolina Scenic Rivers Program is to protect unique and outstanding river resources throughout South Carolina. To accomplish this goal, the program employs a voluntary, cooperative community-based process that allows landowners, community interests, such as conservation districts, and the SCDNR to work together towards common river conservation goals.

DISTRICT IN ACTION



Charleston AFB Earth Day



Twiggie gets a good hug from 4th graders at Malcolm C. Hursey Elem.

2007 Affiliate Membership

- 62 Contributing Members
- 35 Associate Members
- 39 Sustaining Members
- 7 Advertising Members

143 Total Members



Lander Institute

Above students attending Lander Institute have the opportunity to study water quality, boating safety, wildlife and wildlife management, soil composition, geology, plus earn scholarship and college credits!!

EARTH DAY CHARLESTON AIR FORCE BASE

Approximately 700 5th grade students from throughout the Lowcountry participated in various environmental activities at this year's Earth Day celebration. The District, along with about 30 other vendors were invited to participate and featured an exhibit on water conservation. The students were divided into small groups that visited each exhibit for approximately 20 minutes. Our presentation

stressed the importance of conserving and protecting the world's water resources. William Kennerty, William Wilkes and Debbie Eckard represented the District.

JANUARY PARTNER CONFERENCE

The Annual Conference was held January 3-6, 2007 in Myrtle Beach at Kingston Plantation. This year's theme was "Watershed Wise"...Managing Watersheds for Human and Natural Impacts." The attending agencies were: SC Association of

Conservation Districts; SC Department of Natural Resources and the USDA/ Natural Resources Conservation Service.

ARBOR DAY

The Charleston District sponsored an Arbor Day Program at Malcolm Hursey Elementary School on Friday, December 7, 2007. Debbie Eckard and Lindsay Fairchild presented a "Twiggie the Tree" program to 4th graders and discussed the benefit of trees to our environment. Students were given trees to take home to plant. *photo on left...*

SOUTHEASTERN WILDLIFE EXPO

The 25th Silver Anniversary of the Southeast Wildlife Expo was held February 16-18, 2007. This is the nation's largest wildlife art and nature event around the world!

Over 40,000 attendees visited the Conservation exhibit area where District/NRCS staff had an opportunity to interact with

fellow wildlife conservationists. We offered handout information on educational programs available through the district.



SOIL STEWARDSHIP WEEK

Soil Stewardship Week was celebrated **April 29-May 6, 2007**. This year's topic was "Energy Efficiency". The District donated free materials to churches in the area. Contact the District if your church would be interested in learning more about Soil Stewardship.

Call 727-4160 Ext. 3 for more info!

LANDER INSTITUTE

SC Institute for Natural Resource Conservation conducted by Lander University celebrated its 40th year and gave rising juniors and seniors from across the state a chance to study the environment up close for a week and leave with multiple rewards. The District sponsored two students, **Min Bu and Ashley Esposito** on June 25 - June 29, 2007. Both girls were from the School of the Arts.

BACKYARD CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Would your garden club or organization like a program called "Bringing the Natural World Indoors" presented to your organization? This program places emphasis on backyard conservation measures such as soils, native plants, habitat, and ways to incorporate this natural environment into your home. Information on bird feeders and non-toxic cleaners are also discussed. Call Debbie Eckard at 727-4160 ext. 3 to schedule.



DISTRICT EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS

ENVIROTHON

The SC Envirothon Competition was held in Columbia on May 4, 2007. Twenty-five teams gathered at Clemson University's Sandhills Research Center to illustrate their understanding of environmental knowledge in a hands-on problem solving competition. The Envirothon tested students on their knowledge of soils, water resources, forestry, wildlife and also spotlight alternative energy. High school teachers across the state are recognizing the value of the Envirothon as a means of strengthening the environmental awareness of young men and women, while still achieving the goals set by the State curriculum standards. "The Envirothon is science in action and emphasizes real world problems, said one team coach!"

The Charleston District sponsored two teams from James

Island Christian School this year, coached by teacher Twila Shaw. We would like to thank Twila and James Island Christian School for their strong commitment to conservation.

Would YOU like to form a team? Requirements:

Coach - Teacher or volunteer, parent or other interested person

Students - 5 to participate; 1 alternate - Grades 9-12

May form environmental club or come from a particular class or may be boy or girl scout group, 4-H or other.

The coach should participate in the training day where they are given training materials for the team and sample tests.

For more information, visit www.dnr.state.sc.us/etc/envirothon or call **Joy Boswell, Program Coordinator in the Lexington office at 803-359-3165, ext. 3.** if you would like more information on getting your team ready for 2008! The next envirothon competition is May 9, 2008 at Sandhills Research Center in Columbia.

2007 POSTER WINNERS

The 2007 Poster Contest topic was **"Wetland Metaphors?"** The winners are as follows:

Kindergarten - Montessori Community School, Terry Hartnett, Teacher.

First Grade - Montessori Community School, Julie Hund, Teacher.

Second Grade - Charleston

Progressive Academy, Charles Perrineau, Teacher.

Third Grade - Montessori Community School, Carole Anne O'Neal & Robin Promise, Teachers.

Fourth Grade - Montessori Community School, Robin Wiggins, Teacher.

Fifth Grade - W.B. Goodwin Elementary School, Susan Schottler, Teacher.

2007 ESSAY WINNER

This year's Essay Topic was **"Wetland Metaphors"**

9th Grade - Student Corey Forrester of Bishop England High School. Teacher, Diane Linton.

Congratulations to all schools and students who placed in this year's competition!!

How is a sponge and strainer like a wetland?



WE HAVE RELOCATED!

The Charleston USDA Service Center (Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District) has relocated. We are located in the **North Rivers Business Center** which is off Rivers Avenue in North Charleston. Turn right into plaza when you see signs for the Noisy Oyster Restaurant/First Federal Bank. Turn left when you see the large blue & white North Rivers Business Center Sign. We are facing Rivers Avenue along with the Army, Navy, USAF and Marine Corps recruiting offices. Our street address is:

2070 Northbrook Blvd., Ste. A-8, N. Charleston, SC 29406



AWARDS DINNER

The District held an Awards Dinner, May 9, 2007 to recognize individuals who have excelled in environmental conservation and education. This year the District honored several outstanding recipients with the following awards:

Best Conservation Poster Award - Susan Schottler's 5th grade class at W.B. Goodwin Elementary School.

Best Conservation Essay Award - Corey Forrester and Teacher, Diane Linton of Bishop England High School.

Conservation Teacher of the Year - Twila Shaw of James Island Christian School.

2006 Conservationist of the Year - Joseph and Helen Fields of Fields' Farms

2006 National NRCS Earth Team Volunteer of the Year Award - Presented to William D. Wilkes, Associate

Commissioner of the Charleston Conservation District for his 15 years as an NRCS Earth Team Volunteer and his ongoing commitment to the restoration of our dunes and barrier islands in Charleston County.

Congratulations to all of these outstanding conservationists!



POSTER & ESSAY WINNING PICS



Debbie Eckard, left, and Lindsay Fairchilds, award
Terry Hartnett's **Kindergarten Class**
Montessori Community School



Julie Hund's **First Grade Class**
Montessori Community School
Presentations by Fairchilds and Eckard



Debbie Eckard, presents award to
Charles Perrineau's
Second Grade Class
Charleston Progressive Academy



Carole Ann O'Neal's
Third Grade Class
Montessori Community School



Fourth Grade Class
Montessori Community School



William Wilkes, Left, presents W.B. Goodwin
Elementary **Fifth Grade Class** and Teacher
Susan Schottler, upper right, with Poster Award



9th Grade Essay Winner - William Simpson, Chair,
presents **Corey Forrester** and Teacher Diane Linton
from Bishop England High School with Essay Award.



SPOTLIGHT ON ANN BENTLEY!



Ann Bentley, NRCS Soil Conservation Technician in Charleston County, was recognized as the **2007 Cooperator of the Year for Berkeley County**. This award recognizes an individual who demonstrates a strong conservation ethic. Historically, the District has recognized local farmers, producers, and timber and wildlife managers.

This year, the award was presented to an individual who has gone above and beyond to educate farmers about the importance of conservation. Bentley has assisted the

Berkeley SWCD for over a decade. Berkeley SWCD Chairman Gary C. LeCroy said, "Ann's thumbprint is on the conservation and management of thousands of acres in Berkeley County. She has helped the landowners of Berkeley County care for their land, forests, wildlife and waters."



Congratulations Ann from both Charleston and Berkeley Districts!!!

Ann Bentley with Moses White of Lifeland Plantation

EARLY SUCCESSIONAL WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT

by Ann Bentley

Today many farms and landscapes lack natural habitat for quail and song birds – early successional areas. Early successional vegetation includes annual native grasses, forbs and legumes. Annuals also produce a prolific seed source for birds and the flowers attract insects that provide an important source of protein and other elements for hatchlings and chicks. Early successional areas are critical for quail and songbird habitat as research indicates that these species are in rapid decline. Other wildlife species also benefit from this habitat.

A light disking, shallow enough to leave 30% residue will encourage early successional habitat. Prescribed burning is also beneficial. Fall and winter are the time of year to manage for early successional habitat to avoid ground disturbance during quail nesting season from April through October. Management patterns in long curvilinear strips provide more edge and more cover for protection from predators. These areas should be maintained in alternate years to leave several growth stages of successional vegetation in the landscape. Bermuda or Bahia grassed sites will require herbicide applications prior to management. For more information on how to improve habitat for quail and songbirds, contact our office or the SC Department of Natural Resources or US Fish and Wildlife office nearest you.





SPOTLIGHT ON RANDY FOWLER!



Randy Fowler returns to NRCS as the Resource Soil Scientist for the Low Country Service Area and is stationed in the Charleston Field Office. For the past seven years, Randy worked with the US Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District in the Wetlands Regulatory Program. He served in the Special Projects Branch as the nationwide permit coordinator, hydric soils specialist, and was responsible for consistency in jurisdictional determinations.

In his previous SC NRCS employment, Randy served as a Soil Scientist in the Orangeburg, Dorchester, Allendale, and Charleston Soil Survey Offices. In his new position he provides technical soil services to the eleven counties within the Edisto and Salkehatchie watershed areas.

Welcome back Randy!

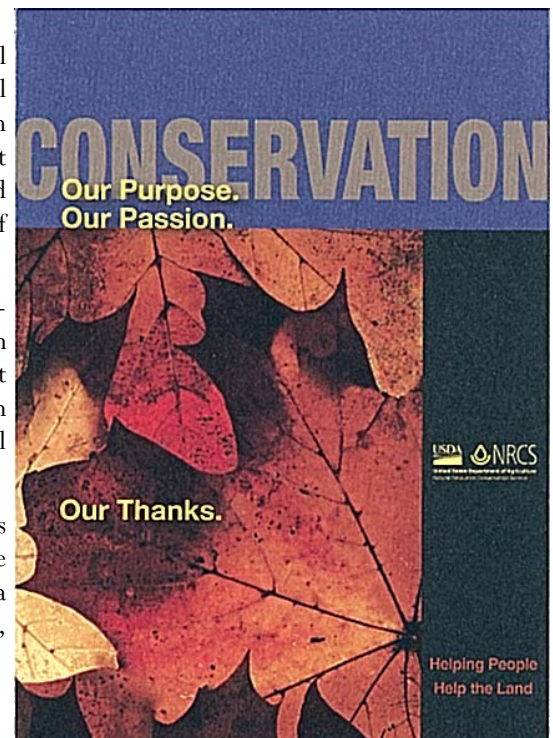
NRCS Accomplishments Update

Charleston county farmers and landowners voluntarily apply conservation practices that provide clean air and water, wildlife habitat, plant diversity, and protect wetlands. In 2007, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provided an estimated \$90,000 in financial and technical assistance to farmers and private landowners in Charleston county. These conservation efforts helped improve water quality with the installation of buffers, increased productivity of crop fields by improving soil quality, targeted declining habitat for wildlife with native warm season grasses, and maintained existing managed tidal wetlands with the replacement of water control structures.

The locally based NRCS staff worked directly with agricultural producers and rural landowners to develop individualized conservation plans to conserve the natural resources on their property. The staff developed plans that included conservation practices, such as prescribed burning, cover crop, nutrient management, pest management, forest stand improvement, tree and shrub establishment, upland wildlife habitat management, field border, and watering systems on 2,509 acres of cropland, forest land, and pastureland in Charleston county.

In the past year, the field office staff provided technical assistance and conservation-related information to over 2500 individuals. The staff participated in outreach activities in partnership with the Charleston Soil and Water Conservation District and the S.C. Department of Natural Resources that included the Southeastern Wildlife Expo, Earth Day celebrations, and elementary and middle school environmental presentations.

With the mission of "Helping People Help the Land," NRCS has provided products and services that enable people to be good stewards of natural resources. Because of our assistance, landowners, operators and individuals have taken a comprehensive approach to the use and protection of natural resources in rural, suburban, urban, and developing areas.



THE YEAR



*"2007 CONSERVATION TEACHER OF THE YEAR"
TWILA SHAW-JAMES ISLAND CHRISTIAN SCHOOL*



*2007 ARBOR DAY/EARTH DAY
CHARLESTON AIR FORCE BASE*



TRIDENT SOILS CLASS VISITS NRCS OFFICE



*2007 BEST OVERALL CONSERVATION ESSAY AWARD
STUDENT COREY FORRESTER OF BISHOP ENGLAND HS*



*SIMPSON PRESENTS BEST CONSERVATION ESSAY AWARD
TO DIANE LINTON, TEACHER AT BISHOP ENGLAND HS*



*ANN BENTLEY WITH RICE TRUNKS BEFORE
INSTALLATION FOR WETLAND RESTORATION*

IN PICTURES



*QUAIL MANAGEMENT AT WADE PLANTATION
L-NRCS DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST RUTHIE DAVIS*



ARBOR DAY AT MALCOLM HURSEY ELEMENTARY



2007 SOUTHEASTERN WILDLIFE EXPO



"MONITORING NATIVE WARM SEASON GRASSES"



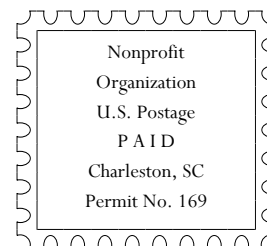
*2007 FALL DISTRICT EMPLOYEE TRAINING CONFERENCE
LYNCHEs RIVER COUNTY PARK, FLORENCE, SC*



*"BOO"
RUTHIE, BILL, DEBBIE, ANN*

CHARLESTON SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2070 Northbrook Blvd, Ste. A-8
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